IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended): A Nordic ski selection system for allowing a user, having a weight within an anticipated range of user weights, to select a ski having suitable performance characteristics to match an unannounced weight of the user, the system comprising:

> a mechanism for assessing the ~~means for accessing the unannounced~~ weight of the user ~~to provide an accessed user weight~~ without disclosing the ~~unannounced~~ weight publicly in common numerical units of weight or mass;
>
> means for assigning said assessed ~~accessed~~ user weight into one of a set of predefined weight ranges to provide a selected user weight range and for providing an encrypted user weight indicator which is distinct to said selected user weight range,
>
>> said set of predefined weight ranges collectively mapping onto the anticipated range of user weights, and
>>
>> said encrypted user weight indicator being selected from a set of encrypted user weight indicators which correspond to said predefined weight ranges; and
>
> a collection of distinct ski indicia suitable for association with skis; each of said ski indicia matching one of said encrypted user weight indicators so as to identify skis having performance characteristics suitable for users having a weight which falls within the one of said predefined weight ranges which is associated with the one of said encrypted user weight indicators which matches that particular ski indicium.

2.   (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended): The system of claim 1, wherein said mechanism for assessing the weight comprises ~~further comprising~~:

a weighing station having,

a platform on which the user can stand,

means for providing an output response proportional to the load applied to said platform, and

~~said platform and said means for providing an output response, in combination, serving as said means for accessing the unannounced weight of the user to provide an accessed user weight, and~~

wherein said means for assigning comprises means for converting said output response into an appropriate one of said set of encrypted user weight indicators,

~~whereby said means for converting said output response serves as said means for assigning said accessed user weight into one of a set of predefined weight ranges and for providing an encrypted user weight indicator~~.

4. (Currently Amended): The system of claim 1 wherein said ~~means for accessing the unannounced~~ mechanism for assessing the weight of the user ~~to provide an accessed user weight~~ further comprises:

a user input interface for allowing the user to input the ~~unannounced~~ weight to provide an inputted weight; and

further wherein said means for assigning said ~~accessed~~ assessed user weight into one of a set of predefined weight ranges and for providing an encrypted user weight indicator further comprises:

a data processing unit communicating with said user input interface to receive said inputted weight;

an instruction set for directing said data processing unit to compare said inputted weight to stored values for said predefined weight ranges and to select an appropriate one of said encrypted user weight indicators based on such comparison; and

means for displaying said selected encrypted user weight indicator.

5.   (Original): The system of claim 1 further comprising:

a collection of ski groups, each of said ski groups having a plurality of skis which are all designed to be suitable for use by users having a weight falling within a particular one of said set of predefined weight ranges, the skis in each of said ski groups being marked with the one of said ski indicia which matches the one of said encrypted user weight indicators that corresponds to the particular predefined weight range for which that particular ski is designed.

6.   (Currently Amended): The system of claim 1, [[2]] wherein said set of predefined weight ranges includes ~~between three and eight~~ four predefined weight ranges.

7.   (Currently Amended): The system of claim 3 wherein said set of predefined weight ranges includes ~~between three and eight~~ four predefined weight ranges.

8.   (Original): The system of claim 6 wherein each of said encrypted user weight indicators and its matching ski indicia share a distinct color.

9.   (Original): The system of claim 6 wherein each of said encrypted user weight indicators is a number and each of said ski indicia is a ski length that corresponds to said number for the matching one of said set of encrypted user weight indicators.

10.   (Original): The system of claim 7 wherein each of said encrypted user weight indicators and its matching ski indicia share a distinct color.

11. (Original): The system of claim 7 wherein each of said encrypted user weight indicators is a number and each of said ski indicia is a ski length that corresponds to said number for the matching one of said set of encrypted user weight indicators.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended): A method for allowing a user having a weight within an anticipated range of user weights to select a ski having suitable characteristics to match the unannounced weight of the user, the method comprising the steps of:

> defining a set of user weight ranges, said user weight ranges being defined so as to collectively map onto the anticipated range of user weights;

> establishing a set of encrypted user weight indicators, each of which corresponds to one of said user weight ranges;

> providing a collection of skis which are sorted into groups, each of the skis in a particular group having performance characteristics suitable for users having any a weight which falls within a particular one of said user weight ranges corresponding to such ski;

> providing a set of ski indicia matched in visual appearance with said encrypted user weight indicators;

> associating the ski indicia with each ski in the group of skis having performance characteristics suitable for users having a weight which falls within the one of said user weight ranges that corresponds to the one of said encrypted user weight indicators which matches that particular one of the ski indicia;

accessing assessing the unannounced weight of the user without publicly providing a common numeric indication of weight or mass to provide an accessed user weight, without disclosing the unannounced weight;

assigning said accessed assessed user weight into an appropriate one of said user weight ranges and identifying to the user the one of said encrypted user weight indicators which corresponds to the one of said user weight ranges into which said accessed assessed user weight is assigned; and

selecting a pair of skis associated with ski indicia which match said identified one of said encrypted user weight indicators.

16. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 15 wherein said step of accessing assessing the unannounced weight of the user further comprises the step of:

providing a known weight of the user; and

further wherein said step of assigning said accessed assessed user weight and identifying the corresponding one of said encrypted user weight indicators further comprises the steps of:

providing a reference chart marked with the limits of each of said weight ranges and with said corresponding encrypted user weight indicators for each of said user weight ranges;

comparing the known weight of the user to said marked limits to determine within which of said user weight ranges the known weight of the user falls; and

using said reference chart to identify the one of said encrypted user weight indicators which corresponds to said determined weight range.

17. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 15 wherein said step of accessing the unannounced assessing the weight of the user further comprises the step of:

weighing the user on a weighing station; and

further wherein said step of assigning said ~~accessed~~ assessed user weight and

identifying the corresponding one of said encrypted user weight indicators further

comprises the step of:

displaying on the weighing station the one of said encrypted user weight

indicators that corresponds to the one of said user weight ranges which

includes the ~~unannounced~~ weight of the user.

18. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 15 wherein the step of establishing a set of

encrypted user weight indicators is done such that said encrypted user weight indicators for each

of said user weight ranges corresponds to a sub-range of that particular user weight range, and

further wherein said step of assigning said ~~accessed~~ assessed user weight and

identifying the corresponding one of said encrypted user weight indicators further

comprises the step of:

if none of said encrypted user weight indicators corresponds to said ~~accessed~~

assessed user weight, providing a query to the user to aid in selecting an

appropriate one of said encrypted user weight indicators.

19. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 18 wherein said step of ~~accessing~~

assessing the ~~unannounced~~ weight of the user further comprises the step of:

providing a known weight of the user; and

further wherein said step of assigning said ~~accessed~~ assessed user weight and

identifying the corresponding one of said encrypted user weight indicators further

comprises the steps of:

providing a reference chart marked with the limits of each of said weight

ranges and with said corresponding encrypted user weight indicators for

each of said user weight ranges;

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comparing said known weight of the user to said marked limits to determine within which of said user weight ranges said known weight of the user falls; and

using said reference chart to identify the one of said encrypted user weight indicators which corresponds to said determined weight range.

20.   (Currently Amended):   The method of claim 18 wherein said step of ~~accessing the unannounced~~ assessing the weight of the user further comprises the step of:

weighing the user on a weighing station; and

further wherein said step of assigning said ~~accessed~~ assessed user weight and identifying the corresponding one of said encrypted user weight indicators further comprises the step of:

displaying on the weighing station the one of said encrypted user weight indicators that corresponds to the one of said user weight ranges which includes the ~~unannounced~~ weight of the user.

21.   (New):   A ski selection system to aid a user in selecting from a plurality of differing skis having differing indicia thereon, the system comprising:

a. a scale including a mechanism for obtaining an reading proportional to the weight of the user, the scale not having a public display that indicates the user's weight in common numerical mass or weight terms; and

b. an indicator coupled to the mechanism, the indicator communicating a range to the user based on the reading obtained by the scale, the range being coordinated to the ski indicia, such that the user may select a ski appropriate to the indicated range.

22. (New): The ski selection system of Claim 21, wherein the indicator includes a face and a pointer, the face having a plurality of ranges thereon corresponding to differing ski indicia.

23. (New): The ski selection system of Claim 22, wherein the indicator face includes ranges for a plurality of series of skis.

24. (New): The ski selection system of Claim 22, wherein the indicator face includes at least one intermediate zone between ranges.

25. (New): The ski selection system of Claim 21, wherein the indicator includes a plurality of symbols coordinated to the differing skis, the indicator displaying a particular symbol to the user.

26. (New): A method for selecting a ski for a user from a plurality of groups of skis, the method comprising:

    a. providing a plurality of skis with indicia corresponding to user weight ranges, the indicia not being written in common numeric mass or weight measurements; and

    b. weighing the user on a scale that does not publicly indicate the weight of the user in common numeric weight or mass units, the scale having an indicator communicating to the user indicia matching indicia on at least one of the plurality of skis.

27. (New): The method of Claim 26, wherein the scale includes a face and a pointer, the face having a plurality of zones thereon, each of the zones having indicia to match a ski suited for the user.